

Child GPS watches – is it worth it?

Does your child wear a GPS watch for safety? You might be exposing your child to predators.

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PROJECT: SAFETY AND SECURITY GPS WATCHES AND CHILD PREDATORS

Photo: Mike Bolhuis Facebook page

Having your child wear a GPS watch for safety might seem like the best safety measure these days, but according to Mike Bolhuis, you might be exposing your child to potential stalkers and predators.

According to Bolhuis, the most common reasons why parents allow their children to wear GPS watches are protection and movements monitoring.

“These devices are becoming more sophisticated in terms of features, however, the security is not keeping pace with hackers and they are thus susceptible to security breaches,” Bolhuis said in a statement.

“Parents could be unwittingly putting their children’s safety and privacy at risk, due to security vulnerabilities, potentially affecting millions of kids wearing GPS tracker watches.”

The software used by a smartphone app that communicates with the watch is so poorly coded, that the connections are easily hacked. Security flaws in child-tracking GPS watches allow total strangers to eavesdrop on your child's conversations and network activities.

According to Bolhuis, the main problem is that the app and the GPS watch do not encrypt their communications and transmit virtually all data in plain text for anyone to eavesdrop on, or interfere with. This includes profile pictures, names, gender, date of birth, height and weight of the child.

"The bottom line is that although this technology is wonderful and has distinct advantages for parents and their children, they must not be lulled into a sense of false security. The watch is not an absolute safety device, it is simply a precaution that can assist with any child's safety and security."

Bolhuis has dealt with numerous cases of missing and kidnapped children across the country.

"I envision a future technology where adults and children can have a microchip implanted that will allow for movements to be accurately located in an emergency. Hopefully by then, the current security and privacy issues will have been addressed," he concluded.

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